

# Where the Rubber Meets the Road: Decentralizing Public Health Reporting in Tennessee

Beth Collier R.N.

Regional Communicable Disease Control Director  
Tennessee Department of Health  
Mid-Cumberland Region

# Background Information:

- Recent departure from the private sector
  - Long career in High Tech Critical Care
  - Used to problem solving and a “Why not” attitude
- DOS???
- Difficulty in obtaining fast data
  - No local Epidemiologist to pull data
  - Local data entry issues

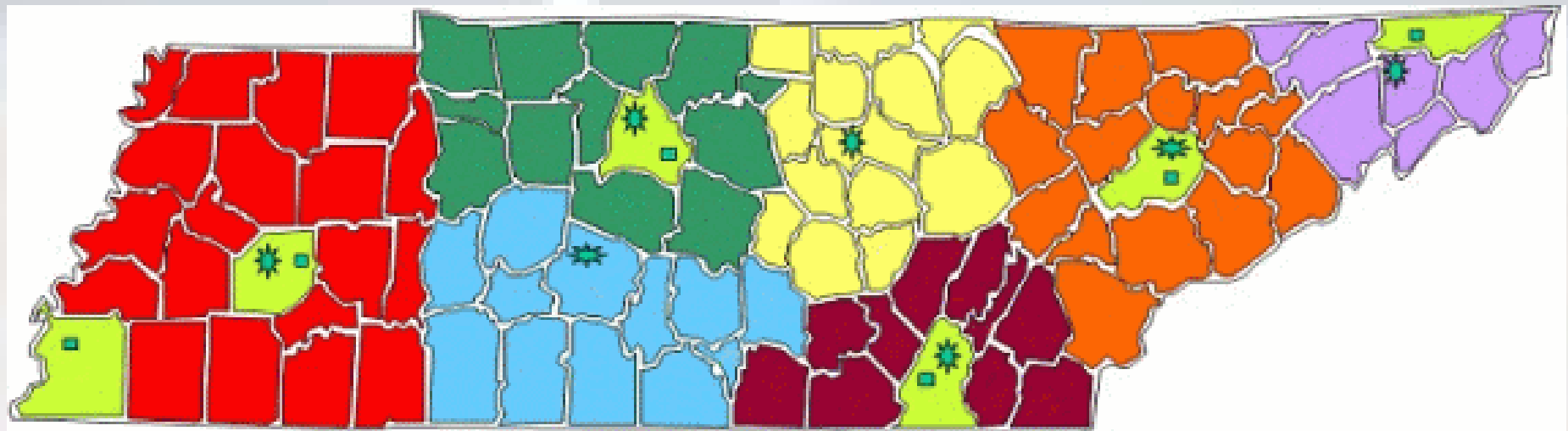
# Program Problems

- Reporting delays from getting the lab slip in hand to closing the investigation and reporting
- Rigid system not easy to work with
- Rigid staff (or “That’s the way we’ve always done it!”)
- Information on “someone else’s” computer
- Data entry not being done by the investigator

# The Volunteer State...

- In 2003 Tennessee volunteered to be one of the pilot states.
- 3 Regions participated; Nashville and Mid-Cumberland and South Central
- Dual entry for the entire trial period
- Input on changes and improvements

# Tennessee



# Trial period

- Many problems identified
  - Navigation problems
  - Logical flow of screens

## HOWEVER

- Potential of web based system identified
  - Remote data entry
  - Tracking the work of staff
  - Starting investigations electronically
  - Management tools
  - Potential paperless system

# Live system roll-out

- In February 2004 Tennessee started parallel data entry on the new system
- At MCRO, we selected 2 staff members to pilot remote data entry
  - 2 middle of the road staff on computer literacy
  - No real bias either way
  - Same county
- Remote data entry was also used in an outbreak setting

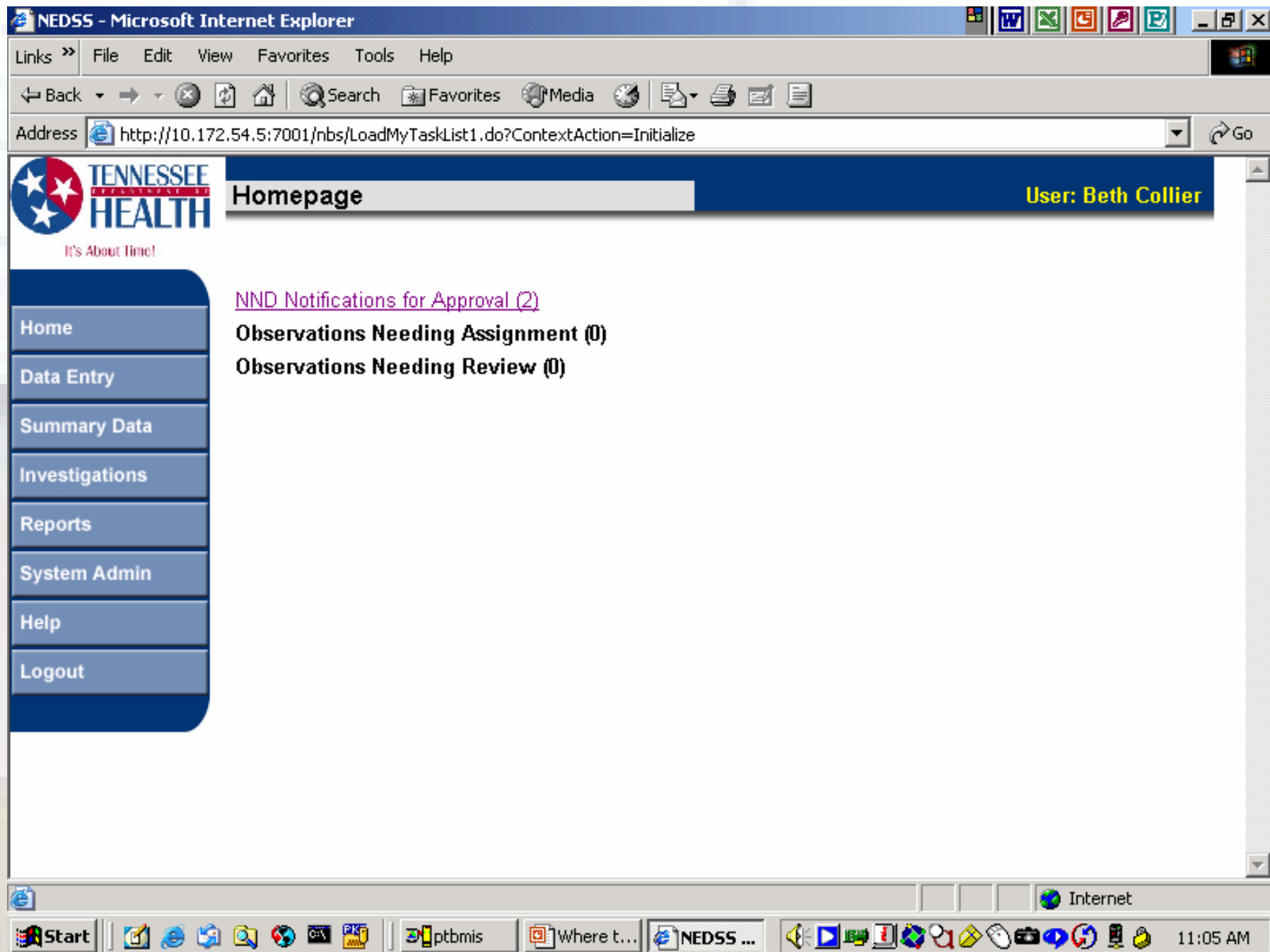
# Impressions from end users:

- Easy and self explanatory
- More efficient
- Can't lose it
- Start the investigation, then come back later and pick up where you left off
- Possibility of a paperless system
- With a few tweaks....it'll be great!



# Suggestions for local level use


- A way to know quickly what cases have been assigned to an investigator
- A better way of listing open investigations for ease of use
- A user-friendly canned report such as “My Investigations”



NEDSS - Microsoft Internet Explorer

Links >> File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Back Forward Address http://.54.5:7001/nbs/LoadNavbar.do?ContextAction=GlobalInvestigations Go



**TENNESSEE HEALTH**  
It's About Time!

**My Program Area's Investigations** User: Beth Collier

Home

Data Entry

Summary Data

Investigations

Reports

System Admin

Help

Logout

[Next](#)

<u>Start Date</u>	<u>Investigation ID</u>	<u>Jurisdiction</u>	<u>Condition</u>	<u>Case Status</u>
05/19/2004	<a href="#">CAS10048089TN01</a>	Mid-Cumberland Region	Salmonellosis	Suspect
05/19/2004	<a href="#">CAS10048088TN01</a>	Mid-Cumberland Region	Salmonellosis	Suspect
05/19/2004	<a href="#">CAS10048086TN01</a>	Mid-Cumberland Region	Strep pneumoniae, invasive	Confirmed
05/19/2004	<a href="#">CAS10048083TN01</a>	Mid-Cumberland Region	Salmonellosis	Probable
05/19/2004	<a href="#">CAS10048078TN01</a>	Mid-Cumberland Region	Hepatitis C, acute	Suspect
05/19/2004	<a href="#">CAS10048077TN01</a>	Mid-Cumberland Region	Hepatitis C, acute	Suspect

Internet

Start | ptbmis | Where t... | NEDSS ... | 11:04 AM

# My experience with an outbreak

- Convenient to use at a local health department
- Saves time and resources
- Faster reporting

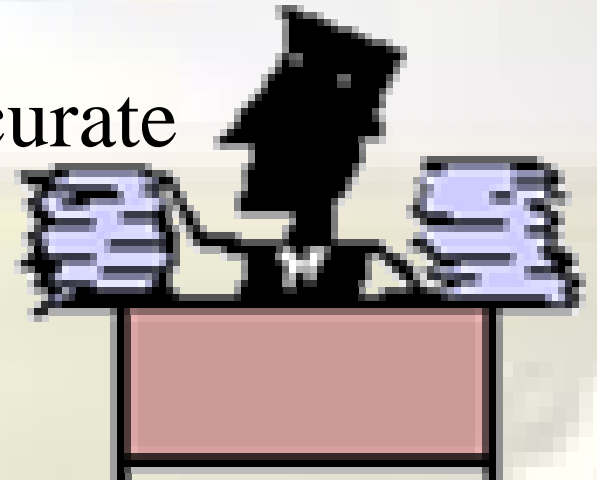


# Suggestions for Program Manager use

- Electronic tag/signature of who submitted what and when
- Specific canned reports for managers
- A preset local jurisdiction selection option for reports
  - i.e. a button for Mid-Cumberland

# Summary

- NEDSS has wonderful potential for allowing the county level staff member to enter their cases electronically, eliminate the paper shuffling and therefore ease their workload
- Potential use for Program Managers as a case-load tracker
- Encourages faster and more accurate reporting



# Contact information:

Beth Collier

710 Hart Lane

Nashville, TN 37247-0801

615-650-7025

[Beth.Collier@state.tn.us](mailto:Beth.Collier@state.tn.us)